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### **DAIL Celebrates National Senior Center Month**

*Commissioner Monica White encourages Vermonters to support Senior Centers*

**Waterbury, VT** Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living Commissioner Monica White authored the following column in honor of National Senior Center Month.

Vermont's 45 senior centers across our state hold incredible value for older Vermonters and our communities. I honor these organizations all year, but this month is a good time to reflect further on the importance of senior centers for all Vermonters.

Senior Centers have long played an important role in my family. In 2011, my beloved Great Gram, Bernice White, then 95 years old, was honored with the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Waterbury Senior Center. I felt honored to be her great granddaughter and was delighted and proud to attend the ceremony where she received a plaque for her dedicated service. My grandparents, now in their mid-eighties, have also continually volunteered for their local senior center. They help deliver Meals on Wheels and help with community events – sharing their talents with friends and strangers alike, weaving threads to strengthen both their community and their own social circle.

One of my earliest and fondest memories is Great Gram teaching me to play cribbage, way back when I was “knee high to a grasshopper.” Earlier this month, I participated in a cribbage tournament fundraiser at my local senior center, Twin Valley Senior Center (TVSC) in East Montpelier (also serving Plainfield, Marshfield, Cabot, Calais, and Woodbury). While I didn't win this tournament (and in fact may have come in last place, knocking me out of contention and tarnishing the White family's storied cribbage legacy!), I had a truly enjoyable day. What made it so special was my interaction with the other participants, including teens, older Vermonters, and all ages in between, centered around our shared love of the game, a delicious lunch prepared by TVSC volunteers, and each other's company.

I am incredibly grateful that events like this happen every day at Vermont's senior centers. Senior centers are truly a pillar of the foundation of what makes Vermont's communities strong. They are helping people live longer, happier lives by supporting older Vermonters with healthy meals, exercise opportunities, intergenerational

relationship building, and friendship – all of which are shown to improve health outcomes. I urge all Vermonters to reach out to their local senior center to participate in events, volunteer, and engage with this vital resource in whatever way is most meaningful to you.

More information on Vermont's Senior Centers can be found here: [Vermont Senior Centers | Adult Services Division](#)

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***About the Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL):***

*Our mission is to make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or to live with a disability - with dignity, respect, and independence.*

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